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Anticipating Brexit: The view from local communities in the Central Border Region

Katy Hayward, with Annemiek Teuwen and Shane Campbell¹

Abstract

The UK's withdrawal from the EU will constitute a major change to the context for such relationships across the border. As such, the Central Border Region is the area most exposed to the risks of Brexit. Although the nature and extent of any changes are as yet unknown, their very prospect already having an impact in the Central Border Region. This article presents the key findings from a small-scale research project – *Bordering on Brexit* - conducted by the Centre for International Borders Research (Queen's University Belfast) on behalf of the Irish Central Border Area Network. The purpose of this project was to give a voice to members of local communities on both sides of the border in this Region, to better understand the potential and actual impact of Brexit even at this early stage.

Cross-border cooperation in the Central Border Region

'I think of barriers when I think of Brexit' (2.0.37)²

When the UK leaves the European Union, the 500km border that runs across the island of Ireland will become an external boundary of the European Union. What this will mean in practice is subject to both the British withdrawal 'Brexit' negotiations under Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union and the contents of any agreement on the future UK-EU relationship. A so-called 'hard Brexit' would mean that the Irish border would be a frontier to the free movement of people, goods, services and capital that is a feature and condition of EU membership. This would mean deepening difference in experience on either side of the Irish border. This is a particular concern in the Irish

¹ We would like to express our sincere thanks to the Board of ICBAN, the participating local authorities/district councils and the SSHRC-funded Borders in Globalization project for support. Most particularly, we wish to express our gratitude to each one of the respondents who took the time to complete the online survey or to participate in a focus group.

² Quotations from survey responses are labelled according to the number allocated to the anonymous survey response, the gender and the local district of the respondent. Focus group quotations are referenced with the number of the group and the time stamp (minute, second) of the start of the extract in the recording.

Border Region, on both sides, which is where the benefits of carefully-fostered, mutually beneficial cooperation have been most valued.

Cross-border cooperation has been used as one means of addressing the particular needs of the Central Border Region – needs which can be summarised in terms of its demographic deficit, rurality, geopolitical peripherality and structural deprivation. Cross-border cooperation has had to work against the background of a stark integrative deficit in the Border Region and differences in policy and administration on either side of the border hindering co-operation in both public and private sectors. There has been a gap in regional-level policy-making, and even those local authorities proximate to the border have not been incentivised to consider policies beyond the remit of their local constituencies. When they have done so, however, the achievements have been considerable. The work of ICBAN (Irish Central Border Area Network) as well as that of EBR (East Border Region) and the North West Strategic Growth Partnership exemplifies the benefits that can come through Region-wide cooperation.

By joining up the regional stakeholders and playing to the strengths of the Central Border Region, cross-border groups such as ICBAN have been able to attract significant EU-funded investment into the Region towards the development of strategic cross-border initiatives. Some of the most effective examples of this investment in ICBAN occurred under the EU Interreg IVA Programme 2007 – 2013 (from the European Regional Development Fund). In order to be delivered successfully, such projects necessarily entail joint structures, such as in marketing, education and management. Participants in this research study explained how funding for projects for such as these have a greater impact than merely the specific programme output:

‘I’ve been on the Interreg Monitoring Committee and that’s another example of the relationships and opportunity to build relationships and see the other person’s point of view, to see the wider angle in the two jurisdictions’. (3.29.46)

‘I also do a lot of community work and have been involved with European projects. Such projects are an excellent way of networking and sharing skills

and information. Much of the funding also comes from Europe.’ (#110, F, Fermanagh and Omagh)

The International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) and the Centre for Cross Border Studies (CCBS) offer several studies of how ‘softer,’ practical cross-border cooperation have benefited groups across all sectors (businesses, regional health authorities, local councils) and promoted better relations between communities. Yet the sustainability of the work of cross-border groups such as ICBAN is threatened by a financial crisis. Not only are many of these cross-border groups heavily dependent on EU Interreg funding for operations, but the constraints of the post-2008 austerity programme in both the UK and Ireland have also left local authorities with shrinking resources from which to commit to these collaborative forums. Even aside from Brexit, the levels of local cross-border public sector co-operation achieved face challenges if they are to avoid slipping back into a state of baseline disintegration. In sum, despite significant efforts and advances, the border continues to exercise a disintegrative influence over local public and private sector actors within the Central Border Region. Unless active efforts are made to protect and sustain cross-border cooperation, there is a risk that the practical gains achieved through it for all communities over the past 20 years could rapidly retreat.

Facing Brexit

The Central Border Region is already conceived by a number of respondents as a ‘marginalized’ or ‘neglected’ area. Despite the successes and achievements of recent cross-border cooperation, this enduring sense of isolation exacerbates many of the concerns that residents have around the potential impact of Brexit; it also dampens some of the perceived opportunities that may be more apparent in urbanized, better-connected locales. As a focus group participant commented:

‘These things are going to be driven from the capital cities and if they are driven from these places, the supports may not be relevant for us in this Region and supports could be somewhat diluted by the time they get as far up the country.’ (1.33.06)

It is notable that the majority of benefits or opportunities from Brexit that were identified by respondents (even Leave voting respondents) tended to be framed as benefits for the UK (or Republic of Ireland) as a whole, or to be quite general Leave arguments, rather than specifically relevant to the Border Region.

The unique position of the border counties are that they are in a 'liminal' zone between the UK and Ireland. In the past, this has meant that they are on the periphery of policy making and political interest in both Westminster and Dublin. With that border becoming an EU/UK border, the concern of the border area is that it becomes even further from the centre of decision-making (especially in the absence of a functioning devolved Assembly and Executive in Stormont). The Border Region is thus at risk of being the Region most deeply affected by Brexit and least closely protected by measures that may be put in place by London or Brussels to mitigate its effects. However, this particular position also puts it at the cutting edge of the new relationship between the UK and European Union. This could mean acting as a bridge between the two. It is clear that a pull to either Dublin or to London merely stretches and exacerbates divisions within Northern Ireland. Instead, cross-border cooperation takes on a new symbolic and practical significance in this environment of uncertainty.

The study

Partly with the intention of informing policy-makers in the management of the consequences of Brexit for the Central border Region, our study's main aim was to listen to the views of people living in rural communities on both sides of the Central Border Region, specifically in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon (ABC); Cavan; Donegal; Fermanagh and Omagh; Leitrim; Mid Ulster; Monaghan; and Sligo. The project has been determinedly non-political and non-partisan. It was not intended to be a comprehensive report on the potential impact of Brexit across a range of sectors but rather an opportunity to record the views of local communities who are 'bordering on Brexit' in a very literal way, from both sides of the border. In order to do so, we have used two means of gathering data: an online survey and focus group interviews. The research was conducted in accordance with guidelines and procedures for research ethics of Queen's University.

The research for this report was conducted in the summer of 2017, it thus constitutes a snapshot of the perception and anticipation of Brexit from the Central Border Region one year on from the June 2016 referendum but before much progress had been made in the negotiations. The focus on the movement of people and goods in the survey responses reflects the main issues raised in media coverage of Brexit. The possible fallout from Brexit for the peace process was also frequently mentioned. Other practical concerns were raised by individual participants, including diverging environmental standards, specialised healthcare provision, shrinking recruitment pools, the loss of EU funding (including CAP), tourism decline and tariff barriers. Just as our research reflects the complex links across the border that make up everyday life and practice in the Region, we found that anticipation of the possible impact of Brexit on any aspect of cross-border movement has ramifications for several others.

We gathered data through the use of an online survey and focus groups. The online survey was promoted and distributed through social media and online forums (such as via a blogpost on brexitborder.com) and through notices given by ICBAN and its member authorities. Through the use of several open questions, we sought to give residents in the Region an opportunity to express their views on the potential impact of Brexit, particularly in relation to cross-border movement and relations. The data cannot be taken in any way to be a quantitative representation of the views of residents in this Region but it does illuminate our understanding of some of the interests, issues and valid concerns of residents on both sides of the border.

The survey received over 300 responses [n=305] from across the eight local authority regions of the Irish Central Border Area Network. Most of our respondents are in full-time work and aged 31-64. They come from both sides of the border and constitute balanced representation from the 8 local authority areas of ICBAN. There was an under-representation in our sample of those with British citizenship and those who voted Leave in the 2016 Referendum. Approximately 60% of our respondents had a right to vote in the June 2016 referendum. Of those who exercised this right, 1 in 6 voted for the UK to Leave the EU, which is not representative of the actual result of the

referendum in the relevant Northern Ireland constituencies. This disparity may be because those most motivated to respond to a survey on Brexit were likely to be Remain voters and concerned to express their views. That said, from our focus groups it was clear that pro-European and Remain voters are just as keen as Leave voters to find ways of ensuring the best possible outcome, and avoiding unnecessary disruption or risk, in the process of Brexit for their local communities. In the final report on the project, we give a dedicated space to presenting the comments from the Leave voters.

The focus groups were composed of respondents to the survey who volunteered to participate in this further exercise. There was also a focus group of local councillors, who between them represented each one of the participating authorities and each of the following parties: DUP, Fine Gael, Sinn Féin, and the Ulster Unionist Party. The focus groups were conducted in 'neutral' spaces in Monaghan town and Enniskillen. The focus groups were centred upon a schedule of questions but the discussion was managed in such a way so as to enable follow-up and elaboration of new areas for conversation as they naturally arose. In this article, we summarise some of the key findings of analysis from both sources of data. [The full report can be found online.](#)³

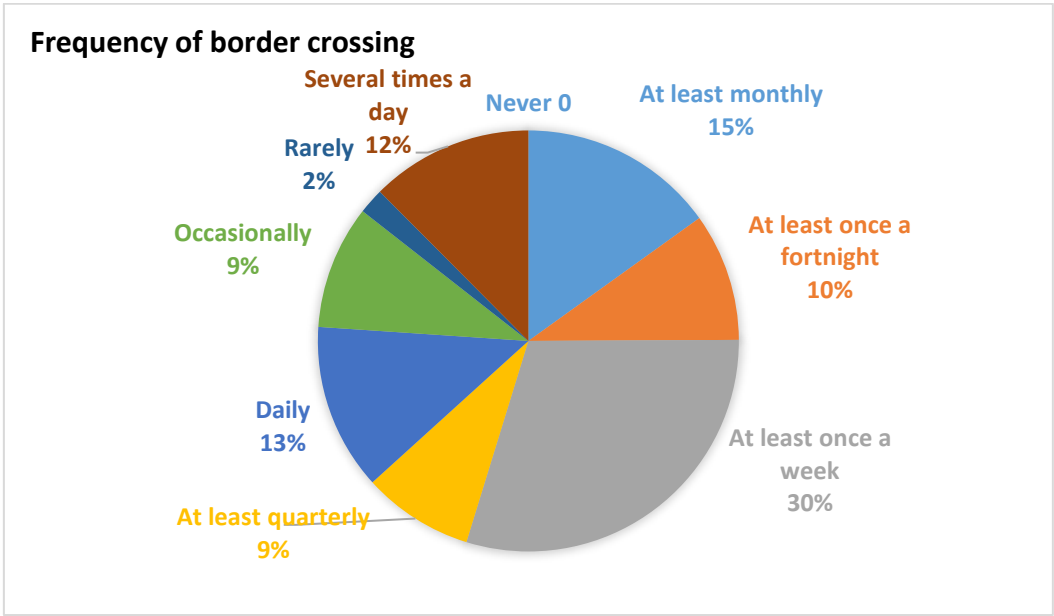
Crossing the border today

Over half of the survey respondents cross the border at least once a week (some daily or even several times a day). This figure is more or less the same for respondents on either side of the border. This has much to do with living in the Border Region itself. One participant in a focus group commented that road networks now meant that one can cross the border several times on a journey:

'For those of us that live near the border, it *has* to be crossed. They recently closed the roads near where I live for roadworks and I counted that, [following the alternative route] I crossed the border 12 times. So if there was a physical border that would be a nightmare.' (2.7.37)

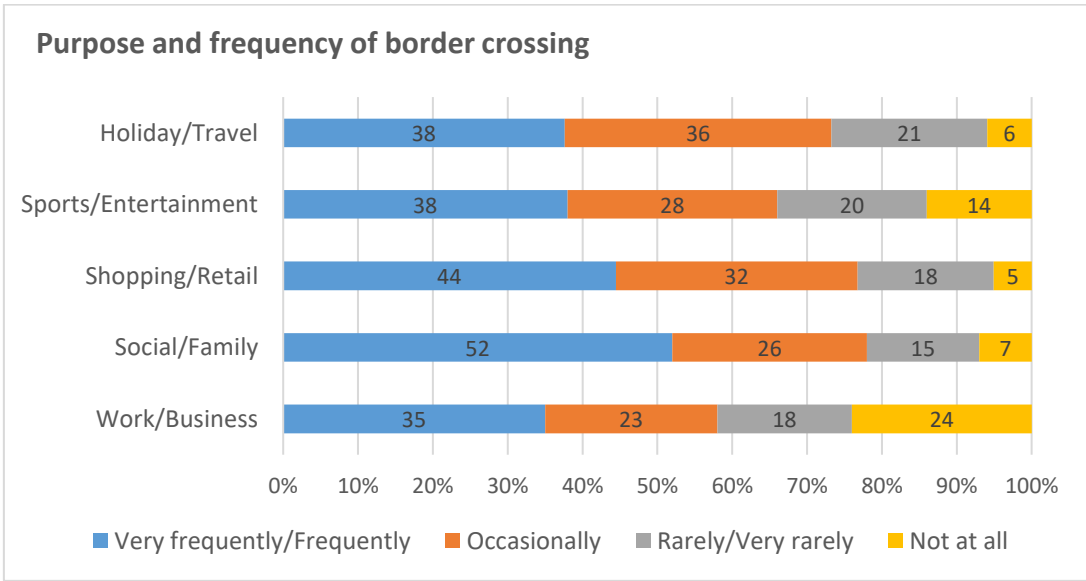
There are only a handful who cross the border 'rarely' and it is notable that none of the respondents said that they never cross the border at all.

³ [Link](#)



Responses to Q. 8. How often do you cross the border?

As to why people cross the border frequently or very frequently, the main reasons are social reasons (e.g. 52% of respondents do so [very] frequently to meet family and friends) and for shopping (45% [very] frequently). This is followed by about 40% of our respondents doing so frequently for work/business and about 38% for sport/entertainment and holiday/travel.



Responses to Q. 9. How frequently do you cross the border for...?

Many respondents, in their comments, mentioned the fact that they have family members on both sides of the border; a few shared that their partner lives on the other side of the border to them. One respondent in particular articulates the type of social and familial ties that exist across the border:

‘My family is split across both sides of the border. I have 50 first cousins with approximately half on each side of the border. I am a member of some literature groups and they regularly meet on both sides of the border. I use the libraries in both Derry and Letterkenny. My house is literally 250 metres from the border across the fields. Everything I do crosses the border. My bus to Letterkenny crosses the border to go to Derry first, then back across the border to complete its journey to Letterkenny. The border going back up, will affect every single aspect of my life in a negative manner.’ (#279, F, Donegal)

Experience of EU membership

The survey also asked respondents the extent to which they considered themselves and their household affected by EU membership across a range of different policy/legislative areas. It is clear from this response that by far the most significant areas in which respondents consider EU membership to affect them are in EU citizenship rights and in EU funding. After these, the main ways in which respondents believe themselves to be affected at least ‘quite a lot’ by EU membership are in relation to holiday/travel (78%), work/business (75%), shopping and retail (75%) and environmental protection (73%).

What this means is much of the experience of the European Union is not only related to travel abroad and to rights but also to very local experience, especially when it comes to direct funding and to matters that entail cross-border activity. We noted above the importance of shopping/retail as a motive for crossing the border, and $\frac{3}{4}$ respondents also see EU membership as being important in this area. In this way, the lines between the experience of EU membership and the ease and experience of crossing the border can be blurred.

Anticipating the personal impact of Brexit

97% of our respondents (from both sides of the border) said that they would be personally affected by Brexit. Those who did not expect to be affected by Brexit tended to be older ('Won't affect me personally a lot, as I am retired') or they had a sceptical view of the media coverage of Brexit ('There will be an impact, some pros and cons but its impact is being hyped up'). Leave voters were disproportionately represented in the number of respondents saying that they would not be affected at all by Brexit. One such respondent said that he believed Brexit would not affect him because 'covered by GFA [Good Friday Agreement]' (#7, M, Mid Ulster).

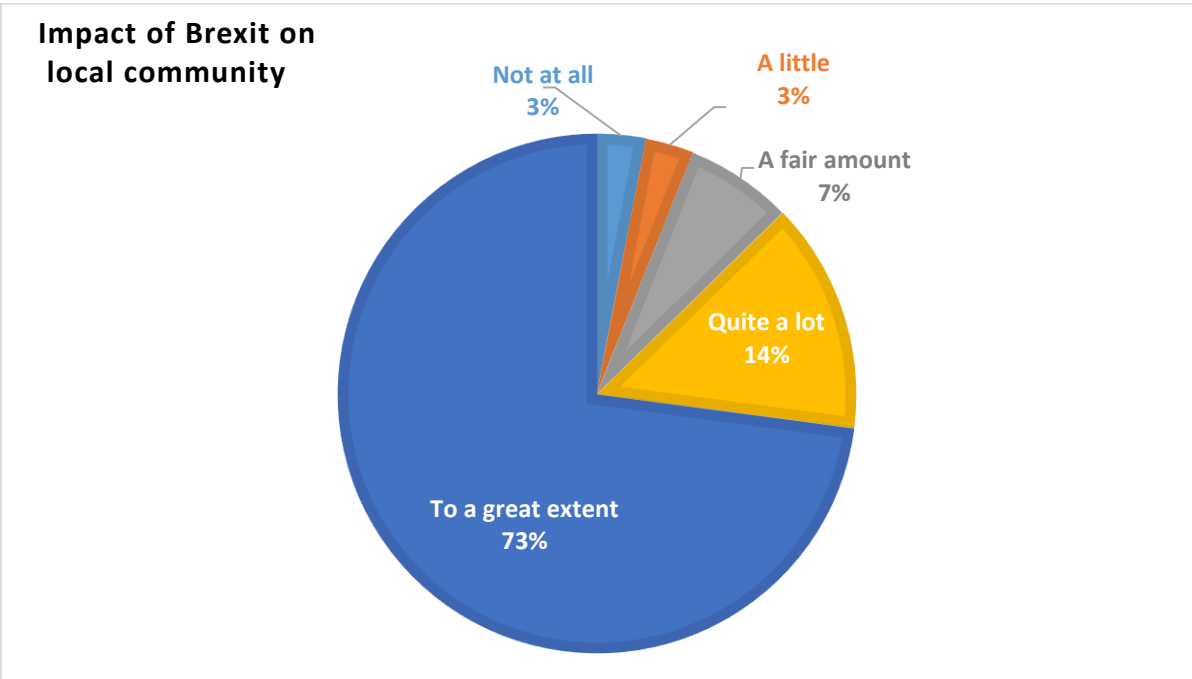
Of those who saw Brexit as having a significant personal effect on them, many mentioned the wider British-Irish context, such as anticipated changes to the position of British passport holders in Ireland and vice versa, and the importance of travel between Great Britain and Ireland. In light of this, it would seem that the preservation of the Common Travel Area is very important for people in the Central Border Region when it comes to managing the effects of Brexit. Travel across the border with ease and the anticipation of other forms of border control were very frequently mentioned as explanations for the anticipation of being personally affected by Brexit. The connection of cross-border movement to 'everyday life' was very apparent, with shopping, sports, holidays, entertainment, business and relationships mentioned frequently in this regard.

Beyond border-centric issues, there were a wide range of reasons offered as to the ways in which respondents anticipated being significantly personally affected by Brexit. A businessman commented: 'Will limit my business development opportunities, remove development grants and limit my free movement.' (#58, M, Newry, Mourne, Down). Others mentioned the loss of EU funding: Farm support payments, Rural Development Programme monies, PEACE funding. A range of other points were raised including employee protections, trade, tourism and agriculture standards.

Not all those who anticipate Brexit affecting them to a great extent viewed this as a negative thing. One commented by way of explanation: 'Great to have rid of the EU, bureaucracy, we can make our own decisions' (#8, M, Mid Ulster); this was echoed by

another: ‘Life will be a lot better the EU has too much say in our affairs and not for the good’ (#16, M, ABC). It is important to recognise that these views were not exclusively those of Leave voters with only British citizenship or resident in Northern Ireland. A Leitrim resident (with joint citizenship) added: ‘[Brexit] will be a tremendously positive influence because we desperately need reform in the EU and only Britain has the ability to stand up to EU imperialism.’ (#27, M, Leitrim). And an Irish citizen in Cavan commented: ‘The UK will be a better place after it leaves EU’ (#9, M, Cavan).

Anticipating the local impact of Brexit



Responses to Q. 19. How much do you think the UK leaving the EU will affect your local community and Region? (Likert scale)

It is evident that those that see Brexit as having most consequence for their locality, tend to emphasise the border and to anticipate its ‘return’. One person, when asked about the impact of Brexit, commented: ‘border of the ‘70s’ (#297, M, Newry). There appears to be no significant difference between respondents in different jurisdictions as to the emphasis they place on the border in the anticipated impact of Brexit. This centres on the importance of the border for the Region. Issues raised include cross-border shopping, travel, trade, and social connections. Others mention particular risks

for particular sectors, and the loss of EU funding is mentioned most frequently as a particular concern.

‘Community and voluntary sector will be hit badly, especially with good relations/cross community work and programmes’ (#286, F, Fermanagh and Omagh).

A little over 6% of the respondents believe that Brexit would hardly affect their local community and region. Looking at the reasons they gave for this view, it centres on the idea that things will either stay the same or improve. These respondents ridiculed what they saw as scaremongering from the ‘doomers and gloomers’ and welcomed the removal of ‘unelected bureaucrats’. Other improvements that they anticipated to be the reduction of red tape, retention of monies currently paid to the EU, ‘the re-establishment of full Parliamentary democracy as a result of Brexit’. Leave voters were disproportionately represented in those believing that Brexit would have no effect on their local community.

Concerns from the ‘southern’ side of the border

A border not only divides, it is a meeting point – what happens on one ‘side’ of the border invariably affects experience on the other. This is powerfully illustrated in the case of a referendum with such significant implications for the economic, social, legal and political environment of a country. For a Border Region, the ramifications are particularly acute – the more integrated a Border Region, the weightier the implications. Responses to some of the questions in this project have brought this to the fore in several ways.

‘Both sides of the border... it’s a community. In Belfast/Dublin, certain sectors may be impacted and others might never be. Within the local border community, it’s *everyone* that will feel it.’ (1.20.02)

‘For a border community, it impacts on every aspect of everyday. When you get up in the morning, which road do you go out on? In Dublin or Belfast they won’t understand. That very close, tight way that it affects everything you think about and everything you do.’ (1.20.20)

‘The vote for Brexit was essentially a vote to turn my county [Donegal] into a peninsula. We are already cut off from our natural urban centre by partition. Any hardening of that line would be economically disastrous for my local area.’
(#73, M, Donegal)

The fact that these respondents did not have a vote in the referendum and yet are deeply affected by its outcome means that the feelings of resentment, anxiety and voicelessness are particularly acute among respondents in the southern border counties.

‘We (in the south) didn’t have any say and we’re going to be equally affected. People face the same issues on both sides of the border.’ (1.31.16)

It is not surprising, therefore, that some of the most urgent expressions of anxiety about the effects of Brexit on the local community come from those on the southern side of the border.

The border and the peace process

Respondents explained that, as things currently stand, the decision as to which side of the border to shop on, for example, depends on what one wants to buy or whom one wants to meet; whether it is the northern side or the southern side only comes into consideration in terms of the currency and price difference. The conversations in the focus groups in particular revealed the paradox of the contemporary border. In some ways it is non-existent, completely irrelevant and not a consideration in daily life:

‘Yes, the decision is to shop in Armagh or Dundalk, but the border doesn’t come into it.’ (1.7.53)

‘Not sure that people are even aware they are crossing the border for shopping or whatever – I don’t think about it.’ (1.7.53)

In other ways, however, the border is ever-present, particularly as linked to politics and the experience of the peace process. This mix of the mundane and the extraordinary significance of the border is encapsulated in the comments of one young survey respondent:

‘[A hard border] would be a Nightmare, politically, socially. It would seriously affect my daily routine, and my faith in the peace process.’ (#155, M, Leitrim)

‘The UK leaving the EU will plunge my life into uncertainty. ...I also worry about the threat of violence if a hard border is imposed as a result of Brexit.’ (#287, F, Fermanagh and Omagh)

To raise the spectre of disruption to cross-border cooperation and movement – making it a politically significant or practically demanding task, rather than ordinary, simple task – does further disrupt the ground on which the peace is founded. This was expressed very powerfully by a participant in a focus group in Monaghan:

‘Even the psychological impact - the re-awareness and the re-awakening of the border. Everyday I’m now thinking ‘what’s going to happen?’ (1.22.22)

‘[A harder border] creates a number of problems and has massive ramifications, not just in terms of where roads are closed off, but emotionally. ... That emotional relationship with a border, in terms of where you think you’re going to go has much longer-lasting impacts. It doesn’t matter if they build [physical] barriers, the fact that they create some form of border...that’s what divides families and communities.’ (2.9.16)

The fragility of the peace process is an immediate concern for many, especially when combined with acknowledgement of the lack of progressive politics in Northern Ireland:

‘People have entrenched positions, heightened emotions on something that hasn’t been dealt with, even from a legacy point of view. We’re still on the path to reconciliation and this is like opening a wound.’ (1.25.25)

Concerns about the peace process were wrought together with concerns about Brexit-induced change for the Border Region. As one respondent holding both British and Irish citizenship put it:

‘I would prefer that Brexit didn’t go ahead because the North is a powder keg already without dragging the nationalist community out of the EU to be a part of the UK and nothing else.’ (#261, F, Monaghan)

Such views speak of an imposed decision and thus of echoes of colonialism. Leave voters were much more likely to see *EU membership* as an imposition and Brexit as an

expression of democratic freedom. This is a fundamental difference between the two positions and one that can only be resolved through clear information, transparency in decision-making and accountability as principles of governance in the Border Region after Brexit.

Priorities for the Brexit negotiations

Respondents' priorities for the Brexit negotiations (including among Leave voters) centre on the need to keep a 'frictionless' border. The practicalities of cross-border movement (and the mundane reasons for this) really come to the fore in people's responses to the anticipated effects of a harder border, especially with regard to farming and agriculture. This is important, given that free movement of agricultural products are not as a rule included in free trade agreements or customs unions with the EU for non-EU member-states. A number of respondents commented on the fact that farming now is far more complicated – and the agricultural markets and supply chains far more integrated – than at the time there was a harder border. This makes the anticipation of a post-Brexit border all the more concerning:

‘There are so many regulations around farming now. Previously when the border roads would have been closed there was less bureaucracy and red tape. Now it's all traceability, far more bureaucracy with it. It's going to be massively difficult with splitting up two farms in two jurisdictions.’ (3.33.50)

Respondents comment frequently on the potential problems for cross-border trade and business, and the fact that some in the Region would have to make different choices about where they will live and work as a result of a harder border.

‘The UK's decision has impacted Ireland in terms of business and highlighting the fact that NI is partitioned from the rest of the island. Many people living in border counties will perhaps have to make serious decision on their workplace/country of residence... Economically I think cross-border businesses need a plan of what happens if a hard border is reality.’ (#217, F, ABC)

A particular Brexit-related concern for business relates to the issue of smuggling comes up in several comments in response to survey question about the impact of Brexit.

Experience already shows that smuggling causes particular harm to the legal economy in the Border Region. A more significant economic border will mean greater incentives for smuggling. As well as causing a difficulty for policing, at one level this also places some legitimate businesses in the area at a competitive disadvantage.

‘Black market economy and illegal behaviour is going to sky rocket again – back to the dark days again. People trying to make a genuine € or £ are subsumed by the illegal activity, illegally procured goods, people avoiding tariffs, avoiding controls whether it is digital or a hard border. People going through fields. People registering cattle on one side and registering on another. Back to the fuel laundering. All that stuff will come back.’ (1.18.17)

A quite different dimension of Brexit-related changes that are already affecting business and life in the border region are felt at a personal level by cross-border or frontier workers. Brexit looks set to affect them not only in terms of changes to the economic conditions of work in the Border Region but also as the UK’s withdrawal from the EU potentially affects workers’ rights, transferability of social security payments and mutual recognition of qualifications. The future position of cross-border workers is one of the most frequently mentioned concerns in the survey responses and a number of our respondents are cross-border workers. Some explained that they are already feeling the effects of the Brexit decision:

‘I live in ROI work in N.I cross the border at least twice daily for work. [I] Socialise, shop and get health care each side of the border. A hard border would make all the difficult and more expensive in time and money. The currency drop of £ already is a huge drop in my money in my pocket. (#151, F, Monaghan)

The greatest concern is that the process of Brexit (and the related disintegration of currently common frameworks) would mean that people would be forced to stay on one side of the border or the other, rather than to live cross-border lives.

‘I live in Donegal and work in Derry, very worried about hard border and implications to local economy in Inishowen. Already seeing impact with property prices and personally with falling exchange rate. I am considering having to sell house and move to Derry or change jobs.’ (#281, F, Donegal).

Looking Ahead

As the border looks set to take on even more material, legal and economic significance come March 2019, it is important that the views and needs of the Central Border Region are taken into account.

‘If something is imposed on people who don’t want it – then you’re talking big trouble.’ (1.22.22)

The recent experience of a very hard Irish border has created a profound awareness in the Border Region of the damage that can be caused by circumstances that affect the symbolic and practical manifestation of the border. Meeting the particular needs of the Central Border Region, then, is seen as a challenge that requires proper representation. This would need to be acknowledged and steered from local political forums as well as at higher levels.

‘If Brexit does go through, I think people locally would be a lot more accepting if their concerns and their fears were dealt with by politicians at a local, national and European level. If conditions were put in that come from Monaghan, come from Donegal – they would be a lot more accepting of the inevitable if they knew their concerns had helped to formulate policy.’ (1.34.11)

Now is not a time to pull back from funding cross-border bodies and groups but a time to invest in them and draw upon their knowledge and experience.

Just as both sides in the withdrawal negotiations have emphasised that they wish to avoid any return to a hard border on the island of Ireland, so too is it imperative that the benefits of cross-border cooperation in the Central Border Region are preserved and protected during and after the UK’s withdrawal from the EU. Amid current uncertainties and political differences, there remains a widely-held commitment across local communities and groups around the Region to continue working together to preserve the gains already achieved and to realise potential benefits for future generations.

Key Findings

This project contains eight core findings regarding the views of local communities in the Central Border Region towards Brexit:

1. The Central Border Region is most exposed to the impact of Brexit. Any change to the status of the border or ability to easily cross the border will have the most direct impact on residents in the Border Region, on both sides of the border. This in a Region where development and cooperation is greatly needed.
2. The legacy of violent conflict is apparent in the fears that people have about the impact of Brexit on the border. For many respondents, the very term 'border control' is one that conjures images of a securitised border and recalls deeply negative experiences and community tensions.
3. The effects of Brexit are already being felt in the Central Border Region. Brexit is already having an effect in respondents' comfort in living on one side of the border and working on the other, and in their confidence in doing business on the other side of the border.
4. Leave and Remain voters differ in their anticipation of a hard border. Leave voters are less likely to fear a hard border – not because they don't cross it or see the economic value of an open border – because they are less likely to believe that negotiations will result in such an outcome.
5. There seems to be a paradox in the contemporary Irish border: crossing the border is both unremarkable and extraordinary. In some ways it is non-existent, completely irrelevant; however, in other ways it is ever-present and at the centre of politics, economics and peace.
6. The overwhelming sense is one of uncertainty; this is not a good thing in a Border Region with a legacy of conflict and under-development.
7. Brexit is exacerbating the sense of marginalisation and invisibility felt by residents in the Central Border Region, in both jurisdictions.
8. There is a risk of return to back-to-back development. Opportunities expressed for the Border Region/Northern Ireland from Brexit tend to be framed as being at the expense of the other.

